

on a *Capparis* bush inside Sudasari enclosure in the Desert National Park in Jaisalmer district of Rajasthan. The nearest known area (Mt. Abu) is about 400 km from Sudasari. According to Ali and Ripley (1983), the Green Munia is found in grass and low bushes, tall grasslands, sugarcane fields, and boulder-strewn scrub jungle. The Sudasari enclosure, where we saw one bird, has up to 1 m tall grasses, thanks to good protection during the last 10 years.

Suresh C. Sharma (*in litt.* 1993) has seen it on 29 and 31 March 1991 in the Taal Chapper Wildlife Sanctuary in Churu district of the Thar desert, which is around 400 km northwest of Gwalior district from where this species was reported earlier. Incidentally, during my 6 years of studies on the Great Indian Bustard *Ardeotis nigriceps* and other birds (*see* Rahmani 1991) in the Karera Bustard Sanctuary in Shivpuri district, and extensive surveys of Gwalior and Shivpuri districts, I did not encounter this species anywhere.

What could be the reason for the sighting of this species in two widely separated areas in the Thar desert? Despite its rarity, the Green Munia is caught for pet trade (Rajat Bhargave, pers. comm. 1994). These recent sightings could have been of escaped caged birds. The Taal Chapper Sanctuary adjoins the village of the same name, so Sharma's sightings could have been from escaped birds but Sudasari is very remote and it is about 65 km from Jaisalmer and I have never seen cage birds being sold in Jaisalmer. The monsoon of 1993 was very good, and during our visit in July, the vegetation was lush green, so most likely, these munias spread out in the desert to avail of the temporary abundance of food and shelter.

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20. SOME NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF BHUTAN

During my stay in Bhutan from March 1989 till May 1994 I did some birdwatching in my spare time. Most of my observations were in accordance with the information given in the HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN by Sálím Ali and S. Dillon Ripley. However, on several occasions I noted differences or additional information. This paper is written in order to share these observations with others. I will also add some notes that need further investigations, e.g. because the subspecies is uncertain. The sequence of the species will be the same as in the HANDBOOK.

1. **Ruddy Shelduck** (*Tadorna ferruginea*): A

pair of this species was observed by me on Gagomo Tso near the Yalela (pass) just south-east of Lhingshi, in the north-western part of the country at an altitude of 4600 m, on May 14, 1993. Although I did not observe a nest, local people told me that ducks were breeding at another lake near Lhingshi. The presence of a pair of these ducks on a location similar to their normal breeding grounds suggests that this species could be breeding in Bhutan as well.

2. **Buzzard** species, probably **Upland Buzzard** (*Buteo hemilasius*): Three Buzzards were seen by me on May 12, 1993 in Lhingshi at an altitude of 4100 m. One gave an aerial display with the typical

buzzard-like mewing call. The tails were heavily barred, unlike most of the tails of the Longlegged Buzzards (*Buteo rufinus*) I observed so frequently in Bhutan in winter (I have seen a Longlegged Buzzard in Bhutan in May as well, on May 5, 1989 in Lhunsi, East Bhutan). The HANDBOOK states that the Upland Buzzard may nest in the higher Himalayas. This observation can support this view.

3. **Hobby** (*Falco subbuteo*): In the summer of 1993, very often I observed a pair of this falcon in the Gidakom valley south of the capital city of Thimpu. One day a nestling was shown to me by children, reported to have fallen out of a nest near the place where I saw the birds regularly. Race uncertain, but probably *F.s. centralasiae*.

4. **East Himalayan Kestrel** (*Falco tinnunculus interstinctus*): The HANDBOOK states that there is only circumstantial evidence of breeding in the Eastern Himalayas. However on the top floor of the house where I lived for 14 months in Lhunsi, in the eastern part of Bhutan a pair of this bird was reported to have bred for several years. As the house was renovated before I came, the birds did not return the year I lived there, but they were around the whole summer. I also found the rest of their nest under the roof with a mummified full grown nestling.

5. **Tibetan Partridge** (*Perdix hodgsoniae*): This species is not recorded from Bhutan, but I saw a pair on May 10, 1993 near Chomolhari base camp at an altitude of 4100 m. Again a pair was seen by me on May 13, 1993 in Lhingshi (4200 m).

6. **Purple Moorhen** (*Porphyrio porphyrio*): On December 2, 1989 I was called by local people who had caught a rather unusual bird near a small stream in Lhunsi, East Bhutan, at an altitude of 1400 m. It turned out to be this species. As far as I know this bird has not been reported from this area. The bird was kept in captivity.

7. **Cuckoo** (*Cuculus canorus*): Singing males of this bird were observed yearly in Gidakom valley (2400 m). Probably this concerns subspecies *bakeri*. According to the HANDBOOK, this subspecies is recorded by Ludlow up to 3300 m altitude in summer. In Lhingshi I saw 2 singing males at an altitude of 4100 m, but may be these were birds of subspecies

canorus which is recorded in adjacent Sikkim up to 4100 m.

8. **Slenderbilled Blacknaped Oriole** (*Oriolus chinensis tenuirostris*): Although reported as a winter visitor from October to March, I observed a male bird in Lhunsi on April 16, 1989. A singing male was seen by me on May 16, 1992 in Wangdiphodrang in West Bhutan, at an altitude of 1200 m. This last bird could have been a Golden Oriole as well, as I did not have my binoculars with me that time. However the song was clearly different from the song of the Golden Oriole I know so well from Europe. The Golden Oriole is not reported to have bred in Bhutan.

9. **Dark Grey Cuckoo-Shrike** (*Coracina melaschistos melaschistos*): This bird was seen by me on June 7, 1992 in Gidakom valley, at an altitude of 2800 m which is 900 m higher than recorded before in Bhutan.

10. **Tickell's Leaf Warbler** (*Phylloscopus affinis*): On May 14, 1993 I observed several singing male birds of this species in Lhingshi at an altitude of 3900 m. According to the HANDBOOK this bird was not recorded in Bhutan in the breeding season before, although it is recorded in nearby Sikkim.

11. **Blue Rock Thrush** (*Monticola solitarius*): Recorded by me in Lhunsi, East Bhutan, in April and August 1989.

12. **Beautiful Nuthatch** (*Sitta formosa*): Occurrence in Bhutan is not certain according to the HANDBOOK. I observed 3 birds near Tingtingbi, Shembang district, on January 31, 1992 at an altitude of about 600 m.

13. **Himalayan Blackbreasted Sunbird** (*Aethopyga saturata saturata*): This bird was seen by me several times in winter (February 19, 1994 for instance) in Gidakom valley (alt. 2400 m). The HANDBOOK states that this bird winters in Sikkim below c. 1000 m and in the western Himalayas between 500 and 1500 m.

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